DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 031 138 HE 000 993

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Student and University Governance.
State Univ. of New York, Buffalo.
Pub Date 69
Note-8p.
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.50
Descriptors-*Administrative Organization, *Governance, *Higher Education, *Student Participation, *Student Role
Identifiers-*Student Assembly

It is necessary to provide organizational and political bases from which genuine student influence can be exercised if we assume that (1) extensive and meaningful participation by students in university governance is likely to be a permanent feature of academic life; (2) participation legitimately represents serious student concerns and provides a channel for their contributions; (3) construction of suitable machinery for greater participation is the only process by which students can become fully committed members of the academic community. To be effective, forms of representation must be personalized and demonstrably linked to humane goals. One possible governance arrangement conceives of the central administration as analogous to the federal executive, and the Faculty Senate and Student Assembly as upper and lower houses of the legislature. Service in the Assembly would be tied to special related academic programs and awarded academic credit. To ensure that the Assembly was truly representative, the student body would be divided into "districts" of about 100-200 members who would elect a representative to the Assembly. Districts would be organized around common ideological interests. Judicial functions could be exercised in a variety of ways, involving, perhaps, distinctive trial courts and appellate tribunals. These provisions briefly outline one response to the fundamental question of what constitutes the appropriate basis of authority in the contemporary university. (JS)

ED031128

STUDENT AND UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE:

A PRELIMINARY SKETCH

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Student and University Governance:

A Preliminary Sketch

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Recent events in universities all across the nation and around the world have lent a new credibility to several assumptions about the governance of the academy. Quite possibly, wiser heads would have arrived at these inferences earlier, but those of us with the capacity for blindness that is so inherently a part of the human condition yet have time (although perhaps not much) to revise our rules and to bring the dynamics of collegial life more into phase with the tempo of contemporary society. At least, there may be some merit in examining the possibilities.

The basic assumptions that seem relevant here are threefold: (1) Extensive and meaningful participation by students in university government is a modern necessity and is likely to be a permanent feature of the academic landscape. (2) That participation legitimately represents serious student concerns and identifies a channel through which the potentials for positive student contributions may be effectively realized. (3) The construction of suitable machinery for greater student participation is the only process by which students can become fully committed members of the academic community, as concerned as other categories of membership with the orderliness necessary for the progressively more sophisticated and more significant debate and for the personal growth that are the main business of our educational venture.

If these contentions can be tentatively accepted for purposes of argument, then some diagnostic hypotheses can be hazarded. First, most of the destructive activity (which must be discriminated from the pressures for radical reform and the expressions of social and political dissent) of our campuses has been spearheaded by a very small minority. The power of that minority is limited by the degree to which they can command support among their peers, most of whom, except in extreme cases, are little interested in anarchy or in nihilistic approaches to America's agonies abroad or convulsions at home. Second, the appropriate and ethical mobilization of the range of views and values in our student bodies requires the provision of organizational and political bases from which genuine influence

can be exercised. If, given such an apparatus, students achieve decisions which are at variance with the preferences of older inhabitants of the academic world, the elders will still be happier under these circumstances than under the rule, however temporary, of either anarchistic destructiveness or the reactionary backlash that it is almost certain to evoke. Third, to be effective, the arrangements developed to enlarge student participation in governance must allow for personalized forms of representation, for the association of the political process with individuals who have distinctive names and distinctive faces.

Indeed, this last condition may lie close to the root of many of the struggles now threatening the vitals of some of our most distinguished institutions. In the last several years, partly as a result of drammatically increased college-going, the pluralism of our campuses, once a proper object of pride, as been transmuted, as if by some negative philosopher's stone, into the essence of a mass society. There is still much of the flavor of diversity's encountering itself, of very different human beings becoming familiar with each other in a context of growing respect and awareness. But there is also a metastasizing element of impersonality, of a supply of niches too small to accommodate the range of people in quest of significant places in the community, of a growing distance between identifiable persons and the loci of decisions that affect their lives and their destinies. Although the charges of dehumanization and irrelevance may sometimes be a function of thoughtless misperceptions, they cannot be totally ignored or convincingly be explained away. The point becomes particularly telling when one remembers that similar concerns have recently been strongly expressed by faculties as well as by students. The search for dignity and self-determination may be far more general in the civilized world of 1968 than many university-based discussions would suggest.

Holding in mind these observations, one may usefully recall some old notions about how governments must rest on the consent of the governed, how t he purpose of government is to secure the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and how the individual as the ultimate touchstone of value must be supported by the governmental process to which he, in turn, must contribute. Applied to present-day institutions of higher learning, these traditional ideas suggest that current forms of governance may be less important than their bases, that the historic apparatus of decision-making, no matter how richly or inventively elaborated or with what good will, has lost its rootedness in the community in which it operates.

For example, a major issue, like the policies regulating campus speakers or the rules regarding the use of alcohol on collegial premises may be resolved by a committee comprising a majority of student members. Its liberal decisions are broadcast in the university's newspaper and made a part of an institutional handbook. Somehow, the student body seems dissatisfied, and the banner of "participatory democracy" continues to fly unappeased. Why?

One answer, it would seem, lies in the probability that the student members of the committee are drawn from no reasonably personalized constituency and that the statements in newspaper and handbook are, in the eyes and experience of most members of the student body, as ex cathedra as if they had been enunciated by an authoritarian president. At no point in such a process is there an opportunity for those who care about the matters under deliberation to enter into the discussion in a way that may influence the outcome. Neither in the formulation of the problem nor in its resolution has there been a chance for a person -- named and distinctive and concerned although without a title or a formal assignment -- to register his views with some one responsible in some clear sense to him. The conditions are ripe for widespread anomie and frustration and their most probable consequences, hostile withdrawal or revolutionary aggression.

There is little to be gained in dismissing these considerations as the psychologizing of politics, as an immature misreading of Burkean styles of representation, or as a sentimental pandering to the uninformed, the uninvolved, and the uncooperative. Refusals to attend to such very real possibilities fly in the face of both our heartrending experience of the past four or five years and our ancient visions, always approximated and never fully realized, of a sinewy humaneness in our institutional life. Whatever the occasional ugliness of their manner and rhetoric and whatever their own sins against the criteria of civility, students across the country are charging that university governance, like aspects of our national governance, has lost effective and demonstrable touch with its humane purposes and goals. Such a charge, especially when it comes from a highly informed segment of our subculture of youth, cannot responsibly be taken lightly.

If it is taken seriously, and if one begins to think of devices by which the process of academic government can be more organically related to the community which is its proper base, then various arrangements, some of them relatively new to the university, rather readily suggest themselves. What follows here is a sketch of one such possibility.

In this design, the central administration is conceived as occupying a position analogous to that of the federal executive. Responsible for certain housekeeping functions such as plant management, accounting, etc., for fund-raising, and for public relations, it also has the initiative for leadership through the ways in which it reports on the state of the academic community, through the programs it formulates and recommends for action by appropriate legislative bodies, and through the style with which it implements the rules and enterprises that are enacted and defined by the suitable agencies within the community. We are speaking here, of course, about the university president his related administrators, and his advisory bodies; but the implications for staffing that may be integral to this conception of academic governance, despite their importance, must be glossed over for our more immediate purposes.

Legislatively, a bicameral pattern involving faculty and students seems most directly to represent the special interests of the total community. The Faculty Senate may be conceived in at least its general outline along the usual lines, although there may be advantages in thinking, in institutions beyond some critical size, more of a representative body than, after the fashion of the town meeting, of the full professorial staff. The Student Assembly would define a lower house in the legislature, relatively large in size and perhaps enjoying certain special powers -- for instance, the initiation of all bills pertaining to the regulation of student conduct. The two houses would be connected by the familiar machinery of conference committees, joint commissions and task forces, formalized relationships between the president of the Faculty Senate and the Speaker of the Student Assembly, etc. The enactment of bills into university "laws" would require the customary agreement between the two houses, thus assuring, among other things, the potency and meaningfulness of the Student Assembly and the involvement of the Faculty Senate in the full range of concerns animating the community.

Two points are of basic importance about the Student Assembly. One is its consonance with institutional purposes; the other is its representative qualities. With respect to the first, there would probably be sizable advantages in gearing service in the Assembly to special seminars or programs of independent study that would insure some reflection on this wealth of

governmental experience in the light of the best that has been said and thought in the world. Ample credit of an academic sort could then be properly given to Assemblymen, avoiding the penalties that often attach to the investment of student time in the operation of the institution and in the shaping of its impact on the people who live within it. The possibility of stipends is not unreasonable. In any event, appropriate reinforcements must be provided for a wholesale, professional, and progressively more informed and thoughtful commitment on the part of students to work that will inevitably be time consuming, sometimes draining to the spirit, and often disruptive of the pursuit of more personal and privatistic aims.

The second issue, that of representativeness, demands a somewhat fuller exploration. If the Student Assembly is to relate itself with greatest intimacy to the general student body, it must develop out of the more encompassing, indigenous interests of the community. In all probability, representation on the basis of residence halls or other geographical considerations would be inadequate, as would representation through academic departments or schools. In the first instance, the involvement of commuters would be difficulty and -- more imperatively -- the necessary arbitrariness and whimsicality of housing assignments would warp the pattern of representation into less personalized modes than those that are desirable. In the second case, the hegemony of departments and their intellectual parochialisms, however valuable they may be to the satisfactions and labors of the professional scholar, are not infrequently the objects of disappointment or revisionist impulses among students. Departmental in erests are in any event, likely to be well looked after in the Faculty Senate in the departments themselves, and through other channels of more informal and local decision-making in the university, and they are seldom the primary source of energy in the press by students for governmental involvement.

In consequence, it may be far preferable to base the Student Assembly on a student body organized into "districts" or "towns" defined by expressed interests. With computer technology available, it is not difficult to identify and to put in touch with each other those students who are concerned, for instance, with race relations within the campus, with the relationship of the university to the larger community, with curricular reform, with the evaluation of instruction and the overall quality of the educational experience, with regulations affecting personal conduct, or with a host of other matters. Any given district would be free, of course, to occupy itself in its meetings with any business it might choose; it would in no sense be limited to the topics around which it was constructed. The central point is

simply that people whc have common interests in one major issue are a little more likely to talk easily together about other issues and to form face-to-face relationships that have some personal meaning and significance. Thus, the politica base would be a personalized one with potential values beyond representation in the Student Assembly.

To retain the virtues of personalization, the districts would have to be of manageable size. Although there is nothing sacred about particular numbers, a limitation of between 100 and 200 members might be important. Districts would duplicate each other in the interests on which they were based, and they would be open-ended in the sense that they could add members from time to time within the restriction of some maximum number. Different districts could meet at any frequency they themselves determined. In a university of 10,000 students, some fifty districts would be operating, a figure that is by no means unwieldy.

Each district would elect a representative to the Student Assembly, a person whom the members could easily know by his first name, whom they could readily approach to discuss matters of concern to them, and from whom they could receive regular reports on the information provided to Assembly-men for dissemination across the campus, on the issues currently before the Legislature, and on his reasons for voting as he had. Ample opportunity would thus be available to call those who cared to register their views with their representative at virtually all points along the process by which decisions are formed; communication would tend to become a much more personalized and responsive affair, and the distance between the citizen and his government should be sharply reduced. As a result, the potentiality for anomie andfrustration should be significantly restricted, and the potentiality for effective participation through more direct representation should be effectively enhanced.

Judicial functions could be exercised in a variety of ways. One mechanism wouldinvolve tribunals comprising students, faculty members, and administrative officers, appointed by the president with the advice and consent of a standing committee drawn from both the Faculty Senate and the Student Assembly. These courts would sit for the purpose of both hearing cases and reviewing legislation and administrative decisions with respect to their congruence to the basic laws and regulations of the community. Although the court system would probably not have to be elaborated in any complex manner, there might be some merit in

a distinction between trial courts and appellate tribunals with the latter subject to an advisory body appointed from the law faculty and from suitable sectors of the public. The university's house counsel should perhaps be involved, and any steps necessary to keep the constraints of the civil and criminal law in full focus would have to be taken.

The achievement of any pattern like this one would mean, of course, a very different university. That, however, is precisely the point if it also means a <u>better</u> university -- one that more fully embodies the values of democracy, that involves all students who want to be involved in clear and definite ways as full fledged members of a community, and that has the governmental flexibility to respond both thoughtfully and rapidly to change in a time when change is the major motif of the age. Obviously, an arrangement of this sort would permit a number of decisions to be made that would displease many whose backgrounds make them unused to displeasure in such matters; but it is unlikely that the decisions would displease a majority of the community, and they would be reached at a high level of probability in an orderly fashion that should at the same time preserve a maximum of freedome for the greatest number of community members.

To bring such a governmental transformation about, something like a university-wide constitutional convention would be called for. In a very real sense, a new constitutional basis for the governance of an academic institution is the thing toward which most of us are groping. The question of what constitutes the appropriate groundwork of authority in the contemporary academy is a fundamental one, and the provisions briefly outlined here represent only one effort to respond to that basic query. The objective is that of preserving the ancient mission of the university while translating its forms into genuinely contemporary patterns, of remoulding the university into an exciting, useful, and humane environment in which <u>all</u> members of the academic community -- a <u>bona fide</u> community -- can zestfully learn together.